

## HS2 Creating New Habitats Including the Planting of 80,000 trees



Construction work began recently on the 118mile long controversial rail line, of which 33.5 miles will cut through the heart of Warwickshire, resulting in the loss of ancient woodland in Cubbington and surrounding areas. However, HS2 says its landscape and ecology programme will create a more joined-up wildlife habitat while incorporating community spaces. More than 80,000 new trees have been planted and 40 ponds have been created in Warwickshire and the West Midlands.

HS2 is creating habitats including badger setts, bat houses, bird boxes, reptile banks and bug houses and some seven million trees and shrubs in its new woodlands, which will be part of a 'green corridor' between London and the West Midlands. Locally these include Finham Brook near Kenilworth where there are six new ponds, grasslands, habitats and woodland has been planted. Near to the Solihull site where the HS2 Interchange station is being built, a new habitat at Biddles Loop includes grassland, ponds, and native woodland planting which is next to the existing Coleshill and Bannerly Pools.

The organisation says it has teamed up with local wildlife volunteers to find new homes for rare wild orchids, successfully relocating over 50 plants to sites including Nelsons Wharf near Southam, and Ryton Wood Meadows near Coventry.

A training pond for otters has also been created on land near Stoneleigh Park to ensure pups can safely adopt anti-predator behaviour and learn foraging and hunting skills, before they take to the waters of the nearby River Avon.

Ecology lead Kat Stanhope said: “Our aim is for HS2 to be the most sustainable railway in the world, and it will make a major contribution to helping Britain fight climate change and reach its net zero carbon targets by 2050. But even before HS2 starts operating, there are countless environmental projects and innovations occurring up and down the route to protect, preserve and enhance Britain’s precious natural environment.

“We have a clear vision for improving the natural environment in the areas around the new railway, such as Solihull and the wider region. We also recognise every location is unique, so we’re making sure our landscape design and ecology work reflects the character of each unique location and is designed to preserve local biodiversity.”